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THE FUTURE OF
UNITED STATES FORCES
IN KOREA

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BY

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THE FUTURE OF UNITED STATES FORCES IN KOREA

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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The end of Cold War has been transforming the international strategic environment. These changes inevitably require a new type of USFK which was constructed under the Cold War structure.

USFK performed its mission successfully in deterring another Korean War and keeping peace and stability throughout Northeast Asia. As world order evolves, USFK's mission will focus on regional stability. Consequently, the primary role of USFK is changing from deterring North Korean aggression to keeping stability in Northeast Asia.

The role change will be followed by a change in USFK's size, structure and command relationships. However, this transformation will be proceeded in accordance with the strategic environmental evolution of the Korean Peninsula.

USFK will be required to keep the regional stability in Northeast Asia. This will be beneficial to the ROK and the U.S. in the future. Therefore, the transformation of USFK must be contemplated under the close cooperation between the ROK and the United States.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. HISTORICAL REVIEW OF USFK.....	3
HISTORY.....	3
EVALUATION.....	8
III. CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING USFK IN THE FUTURE.....	12
NEW STRATEGIC SECURITY ENVIRONMENT.....	12
NECESSITIES.....	15
IV. PROSPECTS FOR USFK.....	25
THE FUTURE ROLE OF USFK.....	25
THE FUTURE SIZE OF USFK.....	27
FUTURE STRUCTURE AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS.....	29
V. CONCLUSION	31
ENDNOTES.....	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY	35

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A significant and far-reaching transition in international relations has taken place in this decade. Particularly, the Cold War confrontations and the East-West rivalry which dominated world politics since the end of World War II have lost significance after the demise of the Soviet Union, not only between the superpowers(U.S. and U.S.S.R.), but also among many other countries.

This international strategic environment has caused a shifting from a bipolar system to a monopolar system which means the U.S. stands alone as a superpower. Simultaneously, the importance of military power as a diplomatic means is gradually being replaced by economic power. Developments toward a "new world order" have been most dramatic in Europe, the Soviet Union, US-Soviet relations, and the world response to the Persian Gulf crisis.

Northeast Asia has not been immune to many of the far-reaching political, economic, and strategic changes sweeping the globe that are destroying the old order and paving the way for a new order. However, Korean-Russian relations and Korean-Chinese relations remain an exception. Northeast Asia remains burdened

with residual regional manifestations of the Cold War, including unresolved conflict in Korea, an unsettled territorial dispute between Japan and Russia, and the continued large-scale military confrontation in the region among the major powers.

In this context, this thesis addresses the future of United States Forces in Korea (USFK) and the evolution of those forces. To address this issue, this paper reviews the history of USFK and evaluates its roles and missions. Also, it analyzes factors influencing USFK and their impact on the future. Lastly, conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made for the future of USFK in terms of structure, roles, missions, and policy.

This thesis is prepared using available literature as the primary research instrument. It includes the use of interviews and discussions with subject matter experts, and relevant working level documents. The research and the thesis are unclassified.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL REVIEW OF USFK

HISTORY

Formal diplomatic relations between Korea and United States began in 1882 when the two nations signed, in Korea, the Treaty of Peace, Amity, Commerce, and Navigation. The prime purpose of the US government in negotiating this treaty was to obtain an agreement that would provide relief for ship-wrecked American sailors. Moreover, if possible, it wanted to negotiate a broad treaty of friendship and commerce.(1) As a result, the treaty did not include any articles on military and security provisions between the two countries.

The history of USFK can be traced to the end of World War II. In September 1945, American occupation forces landed in Korea and established a U.S. Military Government. The U.S. military became the only governing body in South Korea until inauguration of the government of the Republic of Korea in 1948. The U.S. force was principally comprised of the 24th Corps, consisting of 72,000 men, under the command of Lt. Gen. John R. Hodge. This force landed in Korea to accept the surrender of Japanese forces and maintain law and order South of the 38th Parallel. The number of American troops was soon reduced to about 40,000. In 1947, in conjunction with the rapid

demobilization of forces and cutbacks in military spending after WW II, U.S. government officials in the military and in the State Department assessed the military situation in Korea and reached the conclusion that ROK forces were capable of defending against North Korea attack and U.S. forces in Korea could be used elsewhere due to an over all shortage of U.S. military manpower.

In April 1948, the National Security Council (NSC) confirmed the consensus with the decision to withdraw all remaining 40,000 troops from Korea. Although there were some disagreements over the speed and completeness of the withdrawal due to concerns over the increasing instability of South Korea, the U.S. 24th Corps departed Korea in January 1949 leaving only the 5th Regimental Combat Team of 7,500 men. The United States Armed Forces in Korea completed its withdrawal by 30 June 1949 leaving only a military advisory group with 500 officers and enlisted personnel.

After the Korean war broke out in June 1950, the United States sent its troops to Korea in July under the banner of the United Nations. During the War, the level of U.S. military forces in Korea rapidly increased and reached its peak at about 360,000 personnel in seven army divisions and one marine division. As soon as the armistice agreement was signed in July 1953, the United States began to prepare to withdraw its forces. President Eisenhower announced the reduction of American troops

the following December, and in March 1954 two division were withdrawn . By 1957, American Forces in Korea were reduced to two divisions with a total of fifty to sixty thousand troops.

In 1963, discussions on troop reductions in Korea were held at the Pentagon. However, the United States decided to maintain existing levels as compensation for Korea's sending troops to Vietnam. Following the announcement of the Guam Doctrine in 1969, President Nixon made the decision in early 1970, in accordance with recommendations by the NSC, to withdraw 2,000 U.S. troops from Korea and provide funding for a five-year plan to modernize the Korean armed forces. This decision was based on an increased Korean defense capability, U.S. government budgetary considerations requiring global reductions in troop deployments, and a domestic political climate in the United States which demanded positive evidence of military withdrawals from Asia. After the Honolulu Defense Ministers Conference and Vice-President Agnew's visit in 1970, the two countries announced in February 1971 that an agreement had been reached on the conditions for the reduction of American forces and the modernization of Korean Forces. On 27 March 1971, the reduction of 2,000 troops, mainly the U.S. 7th infantry Division, was completed. As a result, the size of American forces in Korea was reduced to about 40,000 troops.

The planners of the 1971 troop reduction had contemplated a

second reduction as early as 1973. It was not until Jimmy Carter's presidency, however, that further reductions became policy. President Carter's plan to withdraw all American ground combat troops from Korea within a four to five-year period was announced at a press conference held on 9 March 1977. This plan called for a phased withdrawal in three stages by 1982. In the Joint Statement of the 10th Annual U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting on 26 July 1977, Secretary of Defense Brown stated that 6,000 troops would be withdrawn by the end of calendar year 1978; withdrawal of the remaining ground combat forces would be carefully phased, and the headquarters and two brigades of the Second Division would remain in Korea until the final phase of the withdrawal. In response to strong congressional pressure and new intelligence estimates of a heavy North Korean military buildup, only 3,600 troops, instead of the 6,000 originally planned, were withdrawn by the end of 1978. Subsequently, President Carter decided in the spring of 1979 to "hold in abeyance" any further withdrawal of combat elements from Korea until 1981. Finally, in the joint communique of 1981, President Reagan assured President Chun that the United States had no plans to withdraw American ground combat forces from the Korean Peninsular.

Negotiations about the future of the USFK began in 1985 after Korea raised the issue of improvement in the command structure of the combined forces at the 17th ROK-US Security

Consultative Meeting.(2) The negotiations, at the governmental level, gained pace and depth after passage of the Nunn-Warner resolution in August 1989. The ROK-US defense ministers' meeting, held in Seoul on 15 February 1990, produced an agreement on a three stage implementation of changes in the size and role of the U.S. forces in accordance with East Asia Strategic Initiative (EASI). During phase one(1990-1992), 7,000 troops were pulled out. But a planned "phase two" cut of 6,500 troops by the end of 1995 was put on hold in 1991 over concern that North Korea was trying to develop nuclear weapons.(3) At the 24th ROK-US Security Consultative Meeting in 1992, both sides reconfirmed that any further drawdown of U.S. forces in Korea would be made only after the uncertainties surrounding the North Korean Nuclear program have been thoroughly addressed.(4) Besides the reduction of USFK troops, there were some changes in military relations between the ROK and the U.S. Both countries appointed a ROK general as the senior member of the Military Armistice Commission, a ROK general as Commander of the CFC's Ground Component Command, and deactivated the Combined Field Army.(5) Also, operational control in peace time was transferred from CFC to ROK armed forces, and the 2nd Infantry Division Headquarters was relocated to the south at the former Combined Field Army Headquarters.

EVALUATION

Throughout the history of USFK, it is possible to arrive at the conclusion that the destiny of USFK depended upon the role and position of the U.S. in the world. After the end of WW II, the U.S. emerged as the predominant state in the world. The U.S. monopolized a small number of nuclear weapons in this period and accounted for 40 to 50 percent of global military expenditures and GNP. In conjunction with the rapid demobilization, however, the American share of world military expenditures swiftly declined to a level of 30 percent in the late 1940s. In the immediate postwar era, the U.S., relying on its predominance in military and economic power, tried to establish a world political and economic order which was more in line with its own interests. Nevertheless, facing a strong Soviet challenge against American predominance, the Truman administration decided to adopt a policy of containment. In this period, the Truman doctrine was primarily focused on political and economic containment of Soviet power in Europe. The U.S. evaluated the strategic importance of Korea as relatively low, and consequently decided to withdraw troops from South Korea.(6)

During the Korean war, the U.S. rapidly increased its military strength on the Korean Peninsula. Also, during this period, the American share of global defense spending reached the 50 percent level. On the other hand, the American share of world

production steadily declined to a level of 40 percent. Following the victory of the communists under Mao Tse-tung in China, and the explosion of the first Russian atomic bomb in 1949, the American government reassessed its global military policy in late 1949 and early 1950. This reevaluation resulted in an NSC decision which called for a decisive shift away from dependence on the political and economic containment of the Soviet Union in Europe to a remobilization of American political and military power for the task of containment on a global scale. Under these circumstances, the U.S. sent its troops to battle in the Korean War as this event was taken to signify a direct threat by the Soviet Union to the existing world.(7) As the Korean war broke out, President Truman issued a statement using the following strong language: "If aggression is successful in Korea, we can expect it to spread through Asia and Europe to this hemisphere. We are fighting in Korea for our own national security and survival."(8) Thus, the U.S. sent its troops to the Korean War in response to its security interest.

In the period 1954 - 1960, the predominance of American military and economic power steadily eroded with the growth of Soviet military strength and the European economic recovery. The American share of global military expenditures slowly declined to the 40 percent level. As for GNP, the American share approached 30 percent during the period. Because of the decline in its economic power, the U.S. had to explore a new and more efficient

type of containment policy. Thus, in 1953 President Eisenhower adopted the "New Look" military program which placed greater reliance upon American nuclear superiority instead of its general - purpose forces. In accordance with this program, American forces in Korea were reduced between 1954 -1957.

During the early 1960s, American predominance was further eroded. In the mid-1960s, the U.S. found it necessary to increase its military expenditures in Vietnam while at the same time facing a deterioration of its economic power. The American share of world expenditures declined to a level below 40 percent in the early 1960s. On the other hand, the American share of total world production continuously declined during the period until it reached a level below 30 percent. Under these circumstances, the U.S. government decided to reduce its troop commitment in Korea. This factor influenced Korea to send its troops to Vietnam in order to strengthen its position for a strong American security commitment to Korea.

The erosion of the American position in the world continued in the period 1969 - 1980. The American share of world GNP gradually fell, reaching 26 percent in 1970, and dropping even further during 1970s. Along with the beginning of detente between the two nuclear superpower on the basis of mutual deterrence, and further decline in American military and economic power during and after the Vietnam War, the U.S. tried to

implement the Nixon Doctrine in the 1970s. In this period, the U.S. reduced its troops in Korea to a level of 40,000.

In the late 1980s, the advent of Gorbachev was the beginning of the end of the Cold War. The American economic situation continued to be serious because of deficits in finance and trade. Under these circumstances, pressure for further withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea began to build in 1987. This led to the passage of the Nunn - Warner resolution in August 1989. In all, 7,000 troops were pulled out of Korea from 1990 - 1992. Although there were some demands by anti-government radicals in Korea to completely withdraw USFK during this period, they were not considered a significant factor in the decision-making process. Rather, they were used as a compromising tool by the U.S. who wanted to implement some reduction, yet maintain influence in the region. USFK still remains in Korea in response to U.S. national interest.

CHAPTER III

CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING USFK IN THE FUTURE

History shows that USFK's structure and strength have been primarily determined by U.S. national interests and the security environment affecting those interests rather than by the needs of the ROK during the Cold War. The new world order however, will inevitably require a new type of USFK.

NEW STRATEGIC SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

The revolutionary changes in the Soviet Union and the East European nations that have been unleashed by Gorbachev's policy of PERESTROIKA and the positive response of the West altered the East-West relationship, which had so far been dominated by a power game between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. However, unsolved differences in political ideology and interests still exist between East and West, keeping them in a state of military confrontation - though it is much less intense than in the past. Also, there are attempts on both sides to exploit the global trend of rapprochement to gain a strategically advantageous position. Furthermore, when serious uncertainties in Russian politics, a revival of Sino-Russian reconciliation and

cooperation, and China's retreat to a conservative line and stiffening attitude toward the West are all added to the equation; the outlook is not so convincingly optimistic.

East European nations are undergoing tumultuous political changes as a result of rapid democratic reforms. Nevertheless, Russia is beset with serious and ever worsening political and economic problems. East Europe is still in a state of flux as it undergoes a period of transition. On the other hand; the East-West power rivalry; and various political, ideological, territorial, racial and religious regional disputes; are fading out as a result of joint efforts by the U.S. and Russia to manage various world crises on a basis of rapprochement for peaceful resolution of regional disputes. There are inherent limitations however, in the roles that the U.S. and Russia can play as mediators in regional disputes. This is particularly true when the disputes involve a sharp-edged conflict of strategic interests between the parties concerned. For example, the Arab-Israel conflict and the Indo-Pakistani feud over Kashmir still defy solution. In addition, continued civil wars in Afghanistan, Cambodia and the former Yugoslavia still pose serious threats to regional peace and stability.

More instructively, the crisis in the Persian Gulf, ignited by the forceful occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, is becoming a potent challenge to the emerging East-West rapprochement. This

suggests the possibility that the use of force will continue to remain a tempting solution to regional disputes in the future. In other words, the Iraqi invasion was a clear indication that the new structures of regional peace and stability are still too brittle and remain helplessly vulnerable to the threat of a belligerent force.

The Asia-Pacific region still remains largely unaffected by the global trend of reduction in military tension with the exception of the established relations between the ROK and Russia, and the ROK and China - the ROK's Northern Policy. The potential for instability in the Pacific Rim is rising in proportion to the increase in the region's importance in the strategic, political, economic and military considerations of the superpowers. Northeast Asia in particular, finds itself at the center of this growing uncertainty.

However, Russian diplomatic efforts to consolidate peace and stability in this region are in direct contradiction to the continuing qualitative improvement in Russian Far Eastern forces. China is pushing on one hand for the revival of strategic cooperation with the U.S. and the improvement of military ties with Russia, while on the other hand continuing the modernization of its military forces. Meanwhile, the U.S. is considering reducing its forces forward deployed in the Pacific region, and Japan is preoccupied with building up new forces able to respond

actively to any change in the volatile military situation surrounding it.

The stabilizing political rapprochement and economic cooperation between the East and West will ultimately have a positive impact toward alleviating the persisting political and military conflicts between South and North Korea. However, despite the emerging neo-detente mood worldwide, the causes of the South-North Korean conflict remain basically unchanged. In keeping with its policy of unifying the peninsula by force under the concept of "liberating the South," Pyongyang persistently attempts to confuse South Korean society through propaganda and agitation. Drastic improvements in South Korea's relations with Pyongyang's allies such as China, Russia, and other socialist nations could backfire by pushing North Korea to launch further aggression against the ROK.

NECESSITIES

Basically, the U.S. wants to keep its forces deployed abroad in order to safeguard its interests as well as those of its allies. The original objectives of USFK were to deter a North Korean attack and to prevent Chinese and /or Soviet military intervention in the event of recurrence of war. By defending the

security of South Korea and preventing a renewed war in Korea, the continued presence of American forces has provided peace and stability in Northeast Asia, thereby protecting U.S. interests in Japan and the Western Pacific.(9)

This objective has been successful so far because there has been no war in Korea and peace and stability in the remainder of Northeast Asia. As discussed above, USFK and its objectives were designed under the pressure of the Cold War. The question is, after the end of the Cold War, will this structure and objectives continue to meet U.S. national interests in the future? In fact, most regional experts believe the USFK structure and roles must be readjusted to address the new world order.

Some suggest that USFK must be reduced or withdrawn in response to the current evolution of the new world order. Doug Bandow, who is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, insisted that a pullout of USFK from the ROK is warranted due to the current ROK prosperity. Donald E. Nuechterlein who wrote AMERICA OVERCOMMITTED, also holds the position that USFK should be withdrawn because U.S. interests in Korea are changed from vital interests to major ones. A major interest does not justify 40,000 American combat personnel being stationed on the Korean peninsula indefinitely. Consequently, the U.S. government should therefore gradually phase out its ground forces from Korea and withdraw them all by the end of the 1980s.(10)

If these assessments are not true, are there U.S. interests which justify a continued presence on the Korean Peninsula? If the answer is 'yes', USFK must readjust its structure, roles, and missions to properly address the new strategic circumstances; particularly the decreasing North Korean threat.

The end of the Cold War does not mean the end of political, ideological, diplomatic, economic, technological, or even military rivalry among nations. It does not mean the end of the struggle for power and influence. It very probably does mean increased instability, unpredictability, and violence in international affairs. It could mean the end of the "Long Peace".(11) Actually, some ethnic and religious conflicts exist between groups throughout the world which are difficult to solve.

Nevertheless, evolution towards a new world order has been most dramatic in Europe, the Soviet Union, US-Soviet relations, and the world response to the Persian Gulf crisis. Northeast Asia has not been immune to many of the far-reaching political, economic and strategic changes sweeping the globe that are destroying the old order and paving the way for a new order. Diplomatic relations have been established between ROK and Russia, and between ROK and China. However, there has been no change relating to new world order in North Korea. Even The South - North Talks initiated between the ROK and North Korea have proceeded with difficulty and have achieved superficial

results.

Under these circumstances, what will the U.S. interests be in the Korean peninsula and Northeast Asia? Moreover, does the ROK need a continued USFK presence on the peninsula? The U.S. security interests in Korea have evolved from an American "Japanocentric" strategy maintaining an effective and stable balance of power and deterrent force to contain Soviet expansion in Northeast Asia.(12) As a link in this strategy, the U.S. objective was to deter another attack by North Korea. In spite of the demise of the Soviet Union and the resulting reduction in the problem of containing communist expansion, a requirement remains to maintain a stable balance of power in Northeast Asia. The keystone to U.S. policy therefore, is to maintain a presence on the Korean Peninsula which in turn leads to regional stability in Northeast Asia. This requirement will remain until North Korea gives up its aggressive desire for forced reunification on its own terms.

Even after Korean unification, other considerations may mitigate for continued presence of U.S. Forces in Korea. In a geo-political perspective, the Korean peninsula has traditionally acted as a bridge between the Asian landmass and Japan. Also, it is surrounded by the three major powers in Northeast Asia; Japan, China, and Russia. The strategic geographic location of the peninsula, its central location among major regional powers and

the economic vitality of the region will continue to make Northeast Asian stability an interest of the United States. The United States can only participate in solving regional disputes and preventing conflicts if it retains a credible military presence; USFK for example.

It is evident that the states in this area will remain major powers in the foreseeable future. Japan's economic power is second only to U.S. in the world. The Japanese realized that economic power is a necessary condition for becoming a major power, but money in itself does not by extrapolation convert into military power.(13) As a result, Japan is trying to beef up its military power to a balance with its economic power and to more effectively meet international responsibilities. Although the Japanese Self Defence Force strength is about 250,0000, it is considered a major power in the because of the force quality. They are well trained and equipped with advanced equipment and weapon systems which are supported by Japanese high technology. Japan now possesses the ability to secure its air and sea lanes out to 1,000 miles from its shores. Japan already has made extensive use of nuclear technology for power generation. It is estimated that Japan could produce a nuclear bomb within 3 to 6 months if it so decided. As noted above, U.S. security interests in Korea were considered in relation to U.S. security interests in Japan. The U.S. interest in Korea was considered vital as part of the policy of containing communism during the

Cold War. But, in the post Cold War era, Japanese economic capability is beginning to threaten U.S. regional interests. Unchecked, Japan has the potential to threaten the U.S. on a survival level.

China is increasing its economic development and has exported advanced weaponry from Russia.(14) China is also modernizing its armed forces in an attempt to achieve Asian hegemony.(15) The Chinese traditionally think their country is the center of the world, and they are now trying to restore the brilliant glory of their past history. The possibility that the Chinese could replace the former Soviet Union as a super power cannot be disregarded.

Regardless of the demise of the Soviet Union, Russia still remains an immense military power. Russian Far East military forces have not been reduced from Cold War levels. There also have been no indications that Russia will give up past expansionist policies in the Pacific Area.

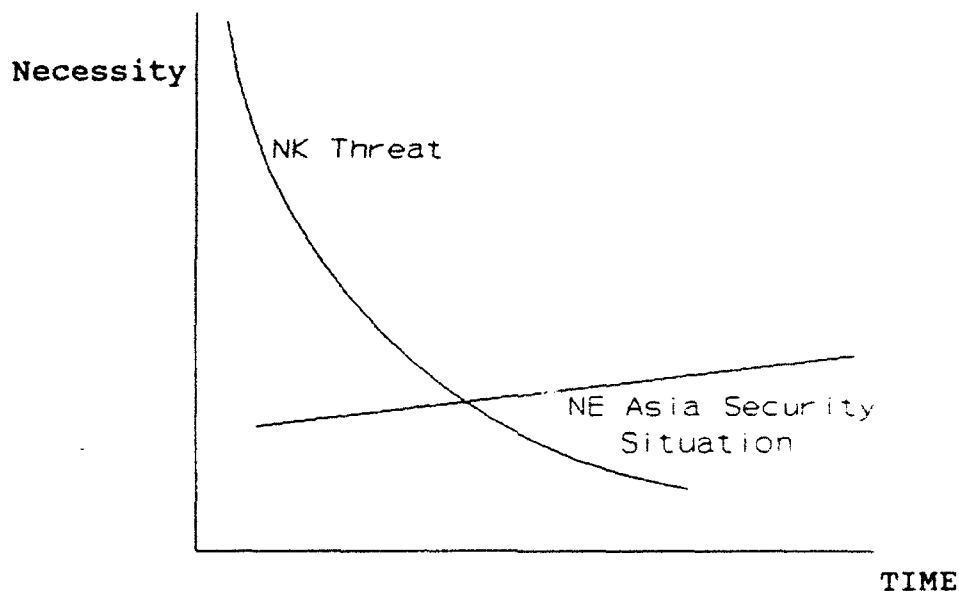
As can be seen, probabilities of conflict among the nations in this area remain high. These include Korean unification, Taiwan's relationship to China, sovereignty of the South China Sea including the Spratly Islands, and ownership of the Diaoyu Islands, known in Japan as the Senkakus, which lie northeast of Taiwan. All these problems simmered during the Cold War period

and have now emerged. Moreover, the economic competition in this area will be a further source of conflict. Economic frictions will emerge as a major issue among regional nation-states. The rapid growth of economic interdependence has linked domestic and foreign policy together more closely than at any time in history. Also, imbedded in Asian nationalism are certain traditional feelings that can be revitalized, including antiforeign sentiments.(16) After the democratization of all the states in Northeast Asia, nationalism will still cause conflict. Nationalism is a natural reaction in democratic societies when external economic forces seem to represent a new threat.

Northeast Asian potential for conflict appears to be growing. Kenneth Hunt, vice president of the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies, expressed the situation as follows, "I wouldn't want to live in Asia in the year 2,000. It will be too dangerous."(17) This potential for conflict will necessitate U.S. commitment. Consequently, U.S. forces will continue to be required in Korea after the Cold War. However, the USFK role will be reduced to a stability mission. The current mission of USFK, communist containment, will diminish, and eventually cease. However, USFK's other principal mission, regional stability, will grow in importance.(18) Likewise, as the necessity for USFK presence to counter the North Korea threat diminishes, the requirement for USFK in a regional stability in Northeast Asia will rise.< Fig. 1 > The junction

of two lines is critical point in relation to the interests of the ROK and the United States.

<Fig. 1> THE REQUIREMENT FOR USFK



USFK presence after the Korean War was based on the Mutual Defense Treaty between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America which was signed 8 August 1953, and entered into force on 17 November 1954.(19) So, although withdrawal of USFK elements from the peninsula depends upon the U.S., stationing and potential employment of USFK elements which exist must be agreed on by both countries. The question is, does the ROK need U.S. forces and specifically USFK stationed on the peninsula? In the near term - Yes; the ROK requires the presence of USFK to supplement its capability to deter North Korean aggression until a peaceful formula for unification is

determined. Some strategists argue that South Korean forces are already capable of defending the ROK against a North Korean attack; Seoul and Pyongyang possess equivalent military power. However, the ROK still relies heavily on American intelligence units stationed in Korea for intelligence collection and analysis. In addition, the U.S. Air Force not only fills ROK Air Force capability shortfalls, but provides vital a deterrent as well as warfighting combat power. The ROK needs U.S. ground forces in Korea because those forces are a key symbol of American resolve to keep its defense commitment to the ROK in the event of renewed war in Korea. Even after Korea is unified, it will need the presence of U.S. forces to balance the influence of the major powers surrounding the Korean Peninsula. Korea's situation is similar to that of Singapore; a country that keeps a large military strength in comparison with its size. Singapore has indicated willingness to provide the basing rights for U.S. forces to replace those lost in Philippines. Singapore's motivation is similar to Korea's. Singapore believes that the presence of U.S. forces will enhance stability in the region.

In addition to requirements already mentioned, the ROK and the U.S. will need the presence of U.S. forces in Korea for other reasons. U.S. forces in Korea provide a geographical strategic center from which power can be projected to address other crises in Northeast Asia. The U.S. presence and resulting enhancement to regional stability will contribute to controlling an arms-race

and nuclear proliferation. Further, the U.S. presence allows it to act with greater weight on regional problems affecting its interests and regional engagement provides a continuing market for military weapons. U.S. presence in the region also enhances training through combined field exercises. The ROK saves on its defense expenditure due to the presence of USFK and can acquire skills on advanced military management, command and control, and operation of weapon systems through combined operations and exercises. The value of USFK will exist as long as military power remains a component of national power.

This fact was stated by the U.S. Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney in the Annual Report to the President and the Congress, February 1992; "U.S. military forces must maintain a forward presence to show U.S. commitment and lend credibility to our alliance, to deter aggression, enhance regional stability, promote U.S. influence and access, and when required, provide an initial crisis response capability.....Under the new strategy, forward presence is an important factor in maintaining global and U.S. influence abroad.....The interests of the United States require the continued presence of our military forces in certain regions of the world, including Europe, Southwest Asia, and East Asia. Our forces will remain for as long as they are needed and welcomed by our allies to protect the interests of the United States and its allies."(20)

CHAPTER IV

PROSPECTS FOR USFK

In today's global strategic environment it is difficult for any nation to ensure its security without cooperation with other nations. Most nations therefore, place a high stake in developing strategic cooperation with other countries either through alliances or treaties. The ROK and the U.S. have developed a strategic alliance to cope jointly with the communist threat and safeguard their common security interests.

THE FUTURE ROLE OF USFK

As noted above, new security circumstances require a change to USFK's role. The possibility of war on the Korean Peninsula is decreasing through the transformation of power structures, e. g., the demise of the former Soviet Union, the success of the ROK Northern Policy and the continuing South-North dialogue. The primary role of USFK is changing from deterring North Korean aggression to keeping stability in Northeast Asia. But it will not be proclaimed overtly until North Korea gives up its strategy of 'liberating the South by force' and its program of nuclear weapon development.

The role of USFK in the ROK-US military relationship is also changing from a leading to supporting role.(21) The transition of the ROK to the leading role in its own defense is an essential element of U.S. long-term strategy. On the other hand, it also reflects both the maturity and growing capabilities of the ROK armed forces and the desires of the ROK. This change is closely connected to command structure. The change in the role of USFK resulted in the command structure of the ROK-US combined forces - the replacement of the chief representative at armistice meetings with a ROK Army Major General, the deactivation of the Combined Field Army, the withdrawal of U.S. personnel from positions directly on the DMZ, the relocation of 2ID HQ and the appointment of a ROK Army four star general as Commander of the CFC's Ground Component Command. At the 24th SCM, both the ROK and U.S. agreed that armistice operational control over the ROK armed forces will be transferred to the Republic of Korea not later than 31 December 1994.(22)

This situation will continue until the ROK and U.S. agree that the North Korean threat has disappeared completely. This will be a turning point in negotiations about USFK between the ROK and the United States. After this turning point, the ROK voice will be stronger and the U.S. voice will be weaker as opposed to the past. USFK will be of greater importance to the U.S. than to the ROK or, at best, the need for USFK will be equal to both countries.

THE FUTURE SIZE OF USFK

The size of USFK will be determined by the continuing evolution of the security situation within and outside of the Korean Peninsula. As mentioned previously, Phase II of the East Asia Strategic Initiative was put on hold because of the North Korean nuclear program. Eventually the transformation of USFK is envisioned to be in two stages.

Stage I (NK's acceptance of the IAEA inspection - Korean Unification) : Phase II and III of the EASI will be executed. Then, USFK may keep its present level of combat air power and reduced ground forces. USAF would fill the gap between the air capabilities of South and North Korea, particularly, in support of intelligence gathering capabilities. The only ground combat power, 2ID, will remain as a cadre organization consisting of a Division HQ and one brigade. The rest of USFK will be adjusted to include supporting units and command structures in accordance with a process of transferring functions to the ROK in accordance with the role change.

Stage II (post Korean Unification) : The USFK will have only one mission, to sustain stability in Northeast Asia. The ROK and United States will need only enough USFK to influence the states

in Northeast Asia as a arbitrator or balancer of power. After Korean Unification, the U.S. justification, for stationing its forces in Korea, will be weak, however, the U.S. will need to maintain the military power in the region in order to influence other Northeast countries. On the other hand, the ROK requirement for USFK presence will decrease. Accordingly, the size of USFK will be determined at this point through ROK and U.S. agreement.

In this scenario, air power will be kept at its present level, because air forces are flexible and adjust easily to changing situations. The ROK and the United States will want to keep the U.S. intelligence assets and TACC at Osan Air Base, which is the largest one operated by the U.S. abroad. However, ground forces will be reduced to brigade size. It will consist of a division HQ and one battalion. This is required in order to keep U.S. influence in the region but with the least maintenance costs to both sides. Through its presence, the Division HQ will be able to guarantee U.S. commitment and ensure rapid forward deployment as well as effective combined CPX,s and FTX,s.

FUTURE STRUCTURE AND COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

This matter is heavily dependent on the transition of U.S. forces from a leading to a supporting role in ROK defense matters. The United States has asked the ROK to increase its contribution to cost sharing in relation to the U.S. reduced defense budget. The ROK began to consider transforming the combined command structure in conjunction with its internal rising self-esteem and ROK plans to restructure the Korean Armed Forces. The main factor in this matter is operational control. The present structure will last until 31 December 1994 when the transfer of peace-time operational control from CINCCFC to ROK JCS will occur. The transformation of the combined command structure can be divided into two stages.

Stage I (1995 - Korea Unification/when North Korean threat disappears) : Each country will be responsible for the operational control of its own armed forces during peace time. In crisis situation, the Combined Forces Command(CFC) will exercise operational control of the units listed in the operational control unit list. In this case, the CFC will exist until the Korean Unification is realized, though there will be minor changes inside of the CFC organization.

Stage II (post Korea Unification/when the North Korean threat disappears) : Each country will exercise operational

control over its own armed forces in peace time as well as war time. The CFC will be disestablished and a new coordinating center will be established to coordinate operations between the two nations similar to the current relationship between the U.S. and Japan.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Actually, USFK is the pivot point of the military relationship between the ROK and United States. USFK performed its mission successfully in deterring another Korean War and keeping peace and stability throughout Northeast Asia. However, it is the legacy of the Cold War to contain the communist expansion. USFK is destined to change its role, size and structure in concert with the new world order.

The new world order, demise of the Former Soviet Union and diplomatic normalization between Russia, China and ROK, have caused the U.S. to change its rationale of containment strategy. ROK economic development and its improved military capability also influences the status of USFK. However, the United States will not withdraw all of USFK from Korea because the U.S. keeps forward deployment as a major security policy to protect its national interests. The U.S. will attempt to readjust the role of USFK to the new strategic security circumstances and to minimize costs. This adjustment to USFK began in 1990 based on the East Asia Strategic Initiative. At This time, the U.S. pulled 7,000 troops from Korea and changed its role from leading to supporting in ROK defense matters during Phase I (1990-1992). Phase II of EASI was suspended until North Korea accepts IAEA inspections.

The readjustment of USFK will proceed through three stages divided by two turning points which are NK's acceptance of IAEA inspections and Korean Unification. Until Korean Unification, the role of USFK will be to deter NK aggression and ensure Northeast Asia stability, the size of USFK will be reduced to one division HQ with one brigade but the Air Force will be kept at the present level and the CFC will exercise only war-time operational control over all forces. After Korean Unification, which will be achieved in terms favorable to the ROK, USFK will have only one role, that is to keep stability in Northeast Asia. There will be no change in air power but ground forces will remain at one division HQ with one battalion. CFC will be disbanded and operations will be conducted through a coordination center.

Although the Cold War is over, it does not mean the end of conflict. Rather it seems that latent conflict is coming out and regional hegemony competition is beginning. The stability in Northeast Asia is essential to United States interests as well as world peace. The United States should contemplate adjusting the role and size of the USFK to the new world order with long range perspectives.

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